CONFERENCE REPORT

ACTIVATING HUMAN RIGHTS
Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status

Leading the Change

27 - 28 September

Curtin University
Perth, Western Australia
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Australian Ally Conference 2018 brought together people from across the world and these lands now known commonly as Australia and the Torres Strait. On behalf of Curtin University, we pay our deepest respects to the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and the Torres Strait.

We would like to acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar people on whose land we convened this conference, and recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of the Noongar people. We offer our respects and gratitude to their vibrant and endless culture and the leadership of the Elders of the Noongar nation, past, present, and emerging.

This country (boodja), where Curtin University is situated, has belonged to the Whadjuk Noongar people for thousands of years and is now a place of learning for all people. Curtin University is very proud to continue on with this very long tradition.

Conference Hosts

Curtin Ally - When students or staff are not comfortable in bringing their whole identity to Curtin, there is a risk both to their own performance and to the strength of their teams. That’s why we’re committed to creating an environment where our students and staff are welcomed, respected and valued, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or intersex status.

Creating and maintaining an inclusive university is central to Curtin’s values and strategic positioning to “above all, be led by our values as we support our staff, promote Indigenous reconciliation and contribute to a fairer and more just society for all”.

The Centre for Human Rights Education is a centre for research, postgraduate teaching, critical scholarship and advocacy on human rights. The Centre leads ethical scholarship, enabling individual agency and community engagement on human rights and social justice through the study and promotion of human rights at local, national and international levels.
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Please note: Interactive hyperlinks are included throughout this document when viewing online. For links to all Conference Resources, please visit humanrights.curtin.edu.au/events/ally-conference/resources/

CURTIN ALLOY

The 2018 Australian Ally Conference was organised by Principal Sponsors Curtin University in partnership with the Curtin Centre for Human Rights Education.
Curtin University was proud to organise and host the 2nd Australian Ally Conference in September 2018. The Conference brought together academic and professional staff and students from 41 universities and education providers across Australia and New Zealand, along with practitioners from across Ally community groups in the education sector and beyond, and industry partners from 50 organisations across Australia to discuss issues and talk about the future of Ally in Australia.
CONFERENCES OBJECTIVES

To open up a national conversation on how to activate human rights in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics for all people.

To explore how Ally networks can contribute to enabling and ensuring the human rights of students and staff in higher education and in diverse institutional contexts.

To showcase best practice of Ally networks in diverse institutional contexts.

To bring together Allyship to the LGBTIQ+ community and also Allyship within the LGBTIQ+ community.

To encourage relationships, collaboration and dialogue across sectors.

To seek advancement of LGBTIQ issues in higher education through incorporation of best practice in university Ally networks and in the broader community.

LGBTIQ+ refers collectively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex, and attempts to include the many people and communities who have additional ways of describing their distinct histories, experiences, and needs. For the purpose of this conference, LGBTIQ+ will be used to aid effective communication about complex concepts around bodies, genders, relationships, sexualities, histories, and lived experiences.

CONFERENCE DETAILS

The Conference was held at the Bentley Campus of Curtin University in Perth Western Australia on the 27th and 28th September 2018. The Conference program composed of 9 plenary sessions with 29 speakers, 20 concurrent presentation sessions with 76 speakers.

For more information please see the Program Handbook online, which also includes a list of participating organisations, sponsors and plenary speaker bios. More Conference information can be found on the Centre for Human Rights Education website.
The Conference was tightly programmed, well organised and ran well over the two days, facilitating the inclusive participation and enjoyment of all who attended. The venues used for the Conference were easily accessible for all, with a rest room provided, free WiFi, closed captioning and non gender specific facilities indicated for the use of all participants.

The organisation of the Conference was managed and organised by the Director of Student Experience’s Office and by the Curtin Centre for Human Rights Education. Various people from Curtin were also responsible for the success of the Conference, as outlined below.

**Conference Convenors**
Ms Michelle Rogers, Director, Student Experience, Curtin University
Professor Baden Offord, Director, Centre for Human Rights Education, Curtin University

**Conference Organising Committee**
Carolyn Cross
Misty Farquhar
Gaylene Galardi
Christopher Macfarlane
Sheldon Smith
Elle Walker

**Conference Advisory Committee**
Panizza Allmark, Edith Cowan University
Jane Armstrong, City East Mental Health, Perth
Wendy Cumming-Potvin, Murdoch University
Hayley Davis, Curtin University
Liam Elphick, The University of Western Australia
Deborah Hunn, Curtin University
Aaron Matthews, Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University
Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, Deakin University
David Rhodes, Edith Cowan University
Fadzi Whande, The University of Western Australia
Program
The Conference program presented a mix of panel plenary sessions, individual presentations and workshops, covering a broad range of LGBTIQ+ issues, organised in the following sessions over the two days:

Day 1 Plenaries
• Rainbow Voices: Who Am I? This Is Who I Am
• Universities and Inclusive LGBTIQ+ Cultures: A Case Study
• Rainbow Rights and The Complexity of Belonging
• The Role of Allies in Industry

Day 2 Plenaries
• Alliances and Solidarities
• The Complexity of Visibility and Social Recognition: Out in the University / Out in the Workplace
• How Can Universities Champion Full LGBTIQ+ Inclusion?
• Politics and Alliances

Concurrent Session Themes
• University Ally
• Activism
• Youth
• Community Ally
• Intersex issues
• Promoting Human Rights Education
• Media
• Workplace Ally
• Being ‘Out’
• Ally Network in Focus
• Hi-Visibility Bi-Visibility: How to Be A Better Bisexual Ally
• Trans and gender diverse people
• Ally in Education
• Human Rights
• Ally
• Queer Generations
• Research

Workshop Themes
• Building Ladders to Get Out of The Lobster Pot- A Queer Lateral Hostility Toolkit
• Building the Future of the Ally Network
• Trans Pathways

Download the full Program Handbook from the Centre for Human Rights Education website.
The Conference attracted speakers from diverse backgrounds and expertise in academia, community and industry experience. Plenary sessions and concurrent presentation sessions were rich in rigour, lived experience and discussion, with people presenting their papers within selected topics.

Plenary Speakers

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG
Professor Deborah Terry, Vice Chancellor, Curtin University
Commissioner Ro Allen, Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality, Victoria
Jane Armstrong, Senior Mental Health Practitioner City East Mental Health Life Coach, Director Homelessness We Care Perth
Jax Jacki Brown, Disability & LGBTI/Queer rights activist
Terri Butler MP, Member for Griffith, Queensland
Morgan Carpenter, Intersex activist and researcher, PhD Candidate, University of Sydney
Rodney Croome, AM, LGBTI Rights Activist and Academic
Misty Farquhar, PhD Candidate, Curtin University
Mackenzie Godson, Senior Manager, Corporate Tax, PwC, Perth
Sarah Guargliado, Executive Manager, Customer Outcome Owner, Bankwest
Braden Hill, Director of Aboriginal Education, Equity and Inclusion, Murdoch University
Mark Hodgson, Manager Pinjarra Alumina Refinery, Alcoa of Australia
Nick Lawrence, Founder of TransFolk of WA
June Lowe, Chair, GRAI (GLBTI Rights in Ageing Inc)
Aaron Matthews, Associate Lecturer, Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University
Bradley Nodari-Stewart, Assistant Director, Workplace Diversity, Australian Taxation Office
Professor Baden Offord, Director, Centre for Human Rights Education, Curtin University
Dr Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, Academic, Author and Community Activist
Senator Louise Pratt, Senator for WA, Shadow assistant Minister for Universities, Shadow Assistant Minister for Equality
Professor Adam Shoemaker, Vice Chancellor, Southern Cross University
Senator Dean Smith, Senator for Western Australia
Dr Shawna Tang, Lecturer at the Gender and Cultural Studies Department, University of Sydney
Sadie Ward, Youth LGBTQIA+ activist and Social Work Student, Curtin University
Michelle Webb, Lecturer, Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University
Dr Dino Willox, Director of Student Employability, The University of Queensland
Jeremy Wray, Senior Account Manager, Oilfield Equipment division of Baker Hughes, a GE Company (BHGE)
Hon. Alison Xamon MLC, Greens Member for the North Metropolitan Region
Participants

The number and diversity of participants, as well as the quality of the presentations and discussions that went on each day, exceeded expectations and greatly contributed to the success of the Conference. There were over 230 participants coming from Universities, community and health organisations, corporations and government.

CONFERENCE RESOURCES

Resources from the Conference can be found at the following links:

- Full Program Handbook
- Photographs on Flickr including: Day 1, Conference Reception and Day 2
- Other Conference Resources including:
  - Pre Conference Interviews with Media Sponsor RTR FM
  - Conference Reporting by Graeme Watson from Media Sponsor OUTinPerth
  - Other post Conference media coverage
  - Human Rights Lecture – Lecture transcript, media coverage and Photographs

The photographs throughout this report and online are credited to Gaylene Galardi, Christopher Macfarlane and Elle Walker.
Baden Offord, Conference co-convener

June Lowe, Plenary 1 speaker

Concurrent Panel sessions, day 1

Concurrent Panels 7 & 8 speakers - Danae Gibson, Katie Darby, Kate Charles, Caitlin Gurney, Bri MKenzie and Graeme Watson

Plenary 2, Universities And Inclusive LGBTIQ+ Cultures: A Case Study, with Professor Adam Shoemaker in conversation with Baden Offord
Concurrent Session 10, Ally Network In Focus - Allan Goody and Jen de Vries

Concurrent Workshop Session 13, Building the Future of the Ally Network

Concurrent Session 11, Hi-Visibility Bi-Visibility: How To Be A Better Bisexual Ally - Hanna Saltis, Duc Dau, Misty Farquhar & Baden Offord

Plenary 4, The Role of Allies in Industry - Brad Nodari-Stewart, Mark Hodgson, Jeremy Wray, Mackenzie Godson and Sarah Guargliardo

Plenary 5, Alliances and Solidarities: Commissioner Ro Allen and Dr Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli with Professor Marion Kickett (Chair)
Plenary 6, The Complexity of Visibility and Social Recognition: Out in the University / Out in the Workplace
Braden Hill, Morgan Carpenter, Dr Shawna Tang, Jax Jacki Brown and Nick Lawrence

Concurrent Panel 19, Human Rights - Tania Penovic presenting

Plenary 7, How Can Universities Champion Full LGBTIQ+ Inclusion? - Professor Archie Clements (Chair), The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG, Professor Deborah Terry AO, Commissioner Ro Allen, Braden Hill and Misty Farquhar

Conference Rainbow Sponsors, Alcoa of Australia

Concurrent Panel 23, Research - Leanne McRae presenting

Plenary 8, Politics and Alliances - Hon. Giz Watson MLC (Chair), Hon. Alison Xamon MLC, Rodney Croome AM, Senator Louise Pratt and Senator Dean Smith
PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

UNIVERSITIES

Australian National University
Bond University
Burgmann College, ANU
Castan Centre for Human Rights Law
Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University
Centre for Social Research in Health, University of NSW
Charles Sturt University
Curtin Centre for Human Rights Education, Curtin University
Curtin University
Deakin University
Edith Cowan University, South West Campus
Edith Cowan University
Griffith University
Kurongkurl Katitjin, Edith Cowan University
La Trobe University
Macquarie University
Monash University
Murdoch University
Notre Dame University
Queensland University of Technology
RMIT University
South Australian Law Reform Institute, The University of Adelaide
Southern Cross School of Distance Education
Southern Cross University
Swinburne University of Technology
The University of Adelaide
The University of Canberra
The University of Melbourne
The University of Newcastle
The University of Queensland
The University of Sydney
The University of Western Australia
Unitec Institute of Technology
University of New England
University of New South Wales
University of South Australia
University of Southern Queensland
University of Tasmania
University of Technology Sydney
University of Wollongong
Western Sydney University
PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

ORGANISATIONS

ACT Government
AIDS Council of NSW (ACON)
Alcoa of Australia
Anglicare NT
Anglicare WA
Assisting Your Life to Achieve Inc. (AYLA)
Australian Taxation Office
Baker Hughes, a GE Company
Bankwest
Bentley Health Service
BHP Billiton
Bisexual+ Community Perth
City East Mental Health Services
Clifford Chance
Collective Impact
Connection And Wellbeing Australia (CAWA)
Department of Education, NSW
Department of Fire and Emergency Services, WA
Edith Cowan Student Law Society
GLBTI Rights in Ageing Inc (GRAI)
Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA)
Inclusive Education WA, WA AIDS Council
Intersex Human Rights Australia
Just Equal
National LGBTI Health Alliance
National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU)
Newcastle University Postgraduate Students Association (NUPSA)
Notre Dame Student Association
OUTinPerth
Palmerston Association
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) WA
Psychology for Thriving
Presbyterian Ladies College
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Pride in Diversity
Pride WA
Rainbows in Schools
RTR FM
Telethon Kids Institute
The Queer Connection Incorporated
The University of South Australia Rainbow Club
The Youth Educating Peers Project (YEP), Youth Affairs Council WA (YACWA)
TransFolk of WA
Transgender Victoria
Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victorian Government
WA LGBTI Health Strategy Reference Group
WA Police
Wheatbelt Health Network
Woodside Energy
Youth Pride Network, YACWA
ADDITIONAL CONFERENCE EVENTS

CONFERENCE RECEPTION

Thursday 27 September

The Conference Reception, sponsored by the University of Queensland (UQ), was held in the Creative Quarter at Curtin University and was MC’d by local personality Famous Sharron. Michelle Rogers, co-convener of the Conference, introduced Dr Dino Willox from UQ to say a few words on behalf of the sponsor.

Highlights of the evening included two performances of spoken word and poetry by Patrick Kain and Jax Jacki Brown. There was much laughter and enjoyment as conversations from the day’s sessions continued into the early evening. For more photographs from the reception, please go to Famous Sharron’s Facebook page or see Conference Reception photos on Flickr.
ADDITIONAL CONFERENCE EVENTS

CURTIN ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS LECTURE
Presented by: The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG

Friday 28 September 2018

The Conference ended proceedings with the Curtin Annual Human Rights Lecture, presented by The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG, which was held in the Elizabeth Jolley Theatre at Curtin University. Four hundred people were in attendance, including many people who had attended the two day Ally Conference. Professor Baden Offord was the MC for the evening. Noongar elder, Marie Taylor, gave a warm and humorous Welcome to Country, followed by the Gay and Lesbian Singers of Western Australia choir who sang rousing renditions of ‘Titanium’ by David Guetta and ‘Born this Way’ by Lady Gaga. After an introduction by the Vice Chancellor of Curtin University, Professor Deborah Terry, Michael Kirby gave an excellent lecture titled, ‘Beyond Marriage Equality & Skin Curling’. The video of the lecture can be found on the Centre for Human Rights Education Videos webpage and a full text version of the lecture can also be found on the Conference Resources webpage.
FUTURE OF THE ALLY NETWORK

The future of the Ally Network was considered as part of a workshop on Day 1 of the Conference, that was coordinated and run by Alli Edwards from Monash University. Some of the feedback that was collected from the workshop and that was included in the closing plenary included:

- Pooling resources and standardising surveys to get a comparative picture across universities.
- Looking at ideas around student life on campus, events and visible spaces.
- Sharing ideas and research. Connecting with other institutions and sharing the outcomes of surveys so we learn about the impacts that programs are having.
- More ways of sharing beyond conferences, getting word out about what’s out there and going on, even within a university.
- Using technology to make visible and share.
- Impact beyond universities. Beyond reaching out to rural communities, creating programs with (not just for) communities.
- Ways of evaluating student experiences and incorporating their ideas so students have agency in this space.
- Of course, funding, and connecting people making a difference with people in power to create change.
MOTION AND RATIONALE

As a final ending discussion to the Ally Conference 2018, Baden Offord and Michelle Rogers, along with activist Rodney Croome AM, put together a motion and rationale that were read to all those in attendance at the final session. The Motion was carried by the Conference delegates with a unanimous show of hands.

Motion

• That this conference resolves to establish a national coordinating body for Ally programs.

• That a subcommittee be established to develop options for the structure, role, funding and name of a national coordinating body.

• That the subcommittee will include a representative from each state and territory if possible and will be convened by a representative from the state hosting the next Ally Conference.

• That the subcommittee will report at the next Ally Conference with time allotted for discussion and decision-making.

Rationale

Ally programs have contributed greatly to on-campus inclusion and equity for LGBTIQ+ people, but there may be ways for us to improve Ally programs to make them more effective. There are also challenges regarding inclusion, respect and freedom of speech faced by many universities. A national coordinating body could support us in improving our work and helping with the challenges we face.

NEXT CONFERENCE

The University of Queensland has tentatively agreed to host the next Australian Ally Conference, in cooperation with universities in Queensland.
The Conference organisers are grateful to all the people – Curtin staff, volunteers, speakers, chairs and delegates - and organisations who made the 2018 Conference possible and such a wonderful success.

In addition to the Conference Organising Committee, we would particularly like to thank the following people at Curtin University:

Matthew Taylor, Jovana Lazovic and Erica Stewart at Curtin Careers, Employment and Leadership Team for their development of the Conference Program. Thanks also go to Darshil Shah and Julie Howell from Curtin Careers for their vital assistance.

Sharyn Gharakhanian and Madison Wales from the Curtin Humanities Marketing team for their advice and assistance.

Krishan Shah at Curtin Volunteers! for their assistance with sourcing our wonderful team of volunteers, and Hayley Davis for her coordination of volunteers over the two days of the Conference.

Kim Muirden and Trish Ransfield from the Curtin Faculty of Science and Engineering for their invaluable assistance in the week of the Conference.

Stephanie Sik and Marissa Williams from the Curtin School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Enquiry for their invaluable assistance in the week of and leading up to the Conference.
Kind thanks go to our Conference Sponsors, Media Sponsors and Associate Sponsors for their generous support.

**PRINCIPAL SPONSORS**

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Curtin Centre for Human Rights Education

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